



**PORTS**  
**Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students**  
*Distance Learning with California State Parks*



## **Plein Air Painting at Crystal Cove State Park**

### **Unit Profile**

**Contributor** - Kurt Labbe

**Subject** - Art, Plein Air Painting

**Grade Level** - 9-12

**Time Required** - 6 class periods of 50 min. each

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**General Description** – After an explanation of Plein Air Painting, students will connect with an artist via videoconferencing and watch the artist create a plein air painting on location. Students will then create their own paintings and connect a second time with the artist to hold a discussion / critique of all the completed artwork.

### **Academic Content Standards**

Art - Grades 9-12

I. ARTISTIC PERCEPTION - High School

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to the Visual Arts

Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations.

Develop Perceptual Skills and Visual Arts Vocabulary

1.1 Identify and use the principles of design to discuss, analyze, and write about visual aspects in the environment and in works of art, including their own.

Impact of Media Choice

1.5 Analyze the materials used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

III. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT - High School

Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture

Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to visual arts and artists.

Diversity of the Visual Arts

3.3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the diverse issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected artworks.

3.4 Discuss the purposes of art in selected contemporary cultures.

#### IV. AESTHETIC VALUING- High School

##### Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts

Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.

##### Derive Meaning

4.1 Articulate how people's personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the way they interpret the meaning or message in an artwork.

4.4 Articulate the process and rationale for refining and reworking one of their own artworks.

4.5 Employ the conventions of art criticism in writing and speaking about artworks.

#### V. CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND APPLICATIONS - High School

##### Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in the Visual Arts to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learned in visual arts across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and management

##### Connections and Applications

5.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the various skills of an artist, art critic, art historian, art collector, art gallery owner, and philosopher of art (aesthetician).

## **Lessons**

### ***Lesson One***

**Objective:** The students will be able to recognize, discuss, compare and contrast the works of well-known plein air painters.

**Materials:** Computer, Projector or TV hookup.

**Procedure:** Explain what plein air painting is and use the attached PowerPoint Presentation as an outline for a lecture. Notes regarding plein air painting are included in the presentation. After the discussion, students may still have questions about this style of painting. Students will write out questions (on note cards) for the upcoming videoconference.

**Assessment:** The students will turn in their questions for credit.

### ***Lesson Two***

**Objective:** The students will watch a video and see the history of California plein air painting.

**Materials:** TV, VCR, video tape "Impressions of California Early Currents in Art 1850-1930" (Program Three, 30 minutes). This video is available for free through KOCE or if you are a subscriber, it can be downloaded via the internet from the united streaming website.  
<http://www.unitedstreaming.com>

**Procedure:** Show video to students.

**Assessment:** Have students compare and contrast the works of the California Impressionists with the French Impressionists. Describe how the California Impressionists influenced the art community of Southern California as well as the world.

### ***Lesson Three***

**Objective:** The students will teleconference with an artist and be able to recognize plein air painting techniques.

**Materials:** Computer, Projector or TV hookup, Speakers.

**Procedure:**

1. Review the basic concept of plein air painting with the students
2. Establish the teleconference connection.
3. Introduce the artist.
4. Allow the artist to make the presentation to the students. The artist will cover the basics of plein air painting and demonstrate how to sketch out, block in and add details to a plein air painting. The artist will also explain how to pick a good subject to paint and include some discussion concerning composition. A good deal of the demonstration will focus on how light effects the environment and how the artist translates that to the canvass.  
Things the artist will cover:  
Explanation of where you are: why you chose the Laguna coast, mention Crystal Cove Park. (Zoom out and pan with the camera if possible to give the students a good look at the environment.)  
Description of the materials: paints, canvas, easel etc. Feel free to include why you use certain items and why you like them. (What does a plein air painter make sure to never forget?)
5. Leave time for some questions both during and at the end of the demonstration.

## ***Lesson Four***

- Objective:** The students will go out into the field and create a plein air painting using the techniques provided to them during the videoconference. This portion of the lesson may take anywhere from 2 to 4 class periods to complete.
- Materials:** Paints, pencils, palettes, brushes, easels or drawing boards, canvasses or painting paper, paper towels, water, water containers. Optional: camera
- Procedure:** Although this seems like a lot of work it is not all the bad. It is a good idea to scout out a good location before bringing out the students. I do this lesson with my advanced students so there is already a basic understanding of how to mix colors and apply paint.
1. Load up a wagon with the supplies.
  2. Walk to location, upon arrival pass out supplies.
  3. Stress to students to pick a good location with pleasing composition. If you wish, have students cut a rectangle out of a piece of paper and use it as a viewfinder.
  4. Lightly sketch the subject in pencil.
  5. Block in the major color areas paying attention to color and the natural lighting.
  6. Begin to add the elements of the composition working from back to front. For example, if there is a tree in the foreground, have the students paint in the sky and ground behind the tree first, then paint the tree in *over* the background.
  7. As the students are painting I walk around with a camera and take a photo of their subject. In case a student is absent during our “on location” time I have a backup for them to work from in the classroom.
  8. Add some details and highlights.
  9. Wash up, clean up, pack up and walk back to school.
- Assessment:** After the second videoconference the student projects/presentations will be assessed based on the attached rubric.

## ***Lesson Five***

**Objective:** The students will teleconference with an artist and critique each other's paintings.

**Materials:** Computer, projector or TV hookup, speakers, easel, tape, student-created artwork.

**Procedure:**

1. Students will be at various stages of completion with their paintings.
2. Have the artist show the students the completed painting, discuss / critique.
3. Have the students (one at a time) show their work to the artist.
4. Artist will comment / critique on student's painting. If possible have the artist model / demonstrate ways to enhance their artwork. This is where instruction would occur that is specific to the individual student's needs.
5. If there is time the artist can briefly describe their educational background and their career path.
6. Question and answer.
7. Wrap up and goodbye.

**Assessment:** The students will use the artist's suggestions to complete their paintings. The student's projects will be assessed based on the attached rubric.

# *Plein Air Painting*

Possible Points	Points	Criteria
		Is your picture painted using the plein air style?
		Did you pick an interesting subject and pay attention to composition. Is your subject balanced? Does it have a focal point?
		Did you sketch out your landscape lightly in pencil? Does your landscape show depth?
		Did you block in the large areas first, then add the major objects and lastly finish by painting in the details?
		Is your paint layered with one color over another? Does your color palette give your painting a mood or feeling? Did you successfully translate the colors you saw to your canvass?
		Did you take details into consideration and go back to work them into your painting?
		Did you consider a light source and shade your painting? Did you pay attention to the lighting and add shadows where appropriate? Did you consider value and create tints, tones and shades with your paint?
		Did you mix your paints starting with the lighter color then and adding the darker?
		Did you clean the brushes with cool water only?
		Did you store the brushes in the jar bristle side up?
100		<b>TOTAL</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_